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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KYIV 000246

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH FM POROSHENKO

Classified By: Ambassador John F. Tefft. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

1. (C) Foreign Minister Poroshenko embraced President-elect Yanukovych and distanced himself from PM Tymoshenko in a February 12 meeting with the Ambassador. Poroshenko criticized Tymoshenko's unwillingness to concede the election and her denigration of the work of international election observers. This had damaged Ukraine's image. Poroshenko appealed for a senior U.S. delegation at Yanukovych's inauguration. He said Yanukovych planned to make his first trip as President to Brussels to play against his pro-Russia stereotype. President Obama's call of congratulations made a major positive impression on Yanukovych. End Summary.

President's Phone Call/Nuclear Security Summit

2. (C) Ambassador called on Foreign Minister Petro Poroshenko February 12. Poroshenko had met earlier that day with Viktor Yanukovych, who was "elated" by President Obama's February 11 phone call of congratulations. Poroshenko said the President's call sent an important message to Yanukovych -- and also to Tymoshenko. It had helped foster stability in an uncertain post-election environment. Alluding to Tymoshenko, Poroshenko condemned "politicians who apply unacceptable methods" to undermine elections. The essential thing was to support democracy, as President Obama had done with his call. Poroshenko added that he had "tried to deliver such messages" himself.

3. (C) Poroshenko noted that he had prepared Yanukovych's talking points for the call. He was pleased Yanukovych had used the points highlighting the importance of nuclear non-proliferation with President Obama. He briefed Yanukovych on the priority the U.S. had placed on working with the GOU to eliminate HEU that remains in Ukraine. Poroshenko agreed that April's Nuclear Security Summit, coming shortly after Yanukovych's inauguration, offered the chance to move the HEU issue forward. Ukraine would be open to receiving a team from the U.S. to brief on the issue, he affirmed.

4. (C) Poroshenko pledged that MFA would dedicate itself to making sure Yanukovych's inauguration (since scheduled for February 25) was a success. Poroshenko appealed for a high-level U.S. delegation, preferably led by Secretary Clinton. He recalled how he had raised the issue weeks before in a side meeting with the Secretary in London.

International Observers

5. (C) Poroshenko praised the work of international election observers and stressed that he had made a point of meeting with them during the election campaign. He said Tymoshenko later criticized him privately for his embrace of the

observers, saying that it had undercut her allegations of fraud. Poroshenko disagreed. Ukraine, he insisted, should be proud of the fact that so many observers had positive reports on the election; it reflected well on Ukraine. Poroshenko concurred with the Ambassador's assessment of the constructive role that ODIHR's Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini had played.

This is not 2004....  
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¶6. (C) Noting his prominent role in the Orange camp in 2004, Poroshenko said that Yanukovych's election this year was consistent with the fundamental goals of the Orange Revolution: free and transparent elections and the peaceful transition of power. To be consistent with 2004, Tymoshenko needs to accept the result. However, she is not consistent. In 2004, the Orange side used exit polling to show that the Central Election Commission's numbers were fraudulent. This year, when all exit polls give the victory to Yanukovych, Tymoshenko rejects exit polls as invalid.

¶7. (C) What is really happening, Poroshenko said he suspects, is that Tymoshenko is using the court challenges as a power play to keep her coalition together and allow her to remain in office as PM. Poroshenko had favored last year the idea of a Regions-Tymoshenko Bloc unity coalition. However, given hostilities and mistrust on both sides, he did not see this happening now.

First Trip: Brussels

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¶8. (C) Poroshenko said Yanukovych had agreed with his suggestion that Yanukovych play against type and make his first foreign visit to Brussels. Yanukovych should make clear that he too seeks to secure an Association Agreement with the EU, including a Free Trade Agreement and clear membership perspective. Yanukovych would also underline the importance of liberalization of the visa regime with Europe. To keep him on the right track, Yanukovych needs "encouraging messages" from Europe, Poroshenko said. Sarkozy's letter of congratulations had struck such a tone.

NATO, Security Guarantees  
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¶9. (C) Yanukovych does not want to talk about NATO membership now but is open to enhancing Ukraine's cooperation with NATO, Poroshenko said. He urged the U.S. not to read too much into language in Yanukovych's speeches favorable to Medvedev's proposal for new security architecture. Yanukovych will be open to discussing Russia's ideas but this does not mean Yanukovych will favor changing the architecture. NATO membership remains an aspiration, albeit a distant one, Poroshenko insisted.

¶10. (C) Poroshenko asserted that Ukraine would continue its quest for security guarantees. Ukraine's goal would be to make the 1994 Budapest Memorandum legally binding, with all nuclear powers guaranteeing Ukraine's security. Poroshenko stressed that the focus would be on multilateral guarantees, and not on a bilateral guarantee from the U.S.

New Coalition?  
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¶11. (C) Poroshenko mentioned his connections to the "Our Ukraine" bloc in the Rada. Party of Regions is working hard to entice the Our Ukraine-People's Self Defense (OU-PSD) faction to break from Tymoshenko's coalition. From a foreign policy standpoint, Poroshenko contended that it would be good to have OU-PSD in coalition with Regions. It would help

guide Regions to a more pro-Europe, pro-Euro-Atlantic orientation.

Comment

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¶12. (C) Poroshenko sought to use the meeting to highlight his closeness (or what he portrayed as closeness) to Yanukovych. He gave no signal that he planned to step down soon as FM; indeed, quite the opposite. While Poroshenko remains on the short list for prospective FMs under Yanukovych, other names figure more prominently. Ukraine's former FM and Ambassador to the U.S. and current Ambassador to Russia, Konstantin Gryshchenko, is the name senior Regions contacts mention to us most often.

TEFFT